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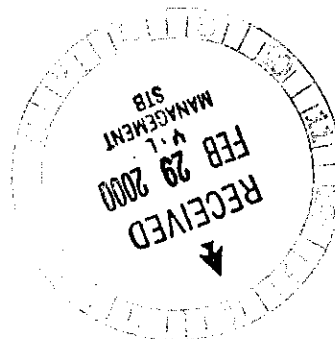
Suite 705, 324-8th Ave. S.W.  
 Calgary, Alberta  
 Canada T2P 2Z2  
 Tel: (403) 261-3999  
 Fax: (403) 264-2959  
 www.highwood-resources.com

24 February, 2000

Mr. Vernon A. Williams  
 Secretary  
 Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary  
 Case Control Unit  
 Attn: STB Ex Parte No. 582  
 1925 K Street, N.W.  
 Washington, D.C. 20420-0001

ENTERED  
 Office of the Secretary  
 FEB 29 2000

Part of  
 Public Record



Dear Sir:

Highwood Resources Ltd., and its wholly owned subsidiaries, Mountain Minerals and Canada Talc Ltd. are industrial mineral processing companies that rely heavily on rail service in the U.S. and Canada. The purpose of this letter is to comment on the issues to be discussed on March 8th, 2000 in Ex Parte 582.

We encourage the Surface Transportation Board to focus on whether the proposed CN-BNSF combination is good for shippers, not on potential downstream effects. The CN-BNSF combination should be judged on its merits and if other carriers propose mergers, then these cases ought to be evaluated on their merits.

The timing of the proposed CN-BNSF combination is not the central issue for our group of companies. Our concern is service. Recent mergers have failed on service, not because of timing. Accordingly, the Surface Transportation Board should focus on ensuring that CN-BNSF combination, and any other future mergers, will deliver reliable and quality service(s).

The Surface Transportation Board has a comprehensive process to evaluate railroad transactions and protect the public interest. It should fairly evaluate the CN-BNSF combination according to that process. Do not allow other railroads to use the Surface Transportation Board process to protect them; while in turn, the shippers suffer the consequences.

Sincerely,

**HIGHWOOD  
 RESOURCES LTD.**

*Stefan M. Michalewicz*  
 Stefan M. Michalewicz  
 Manager, Traffic Logistics

C.C. FILE

02/24/00

INTERMODAL SVCS

FAX 4039746573

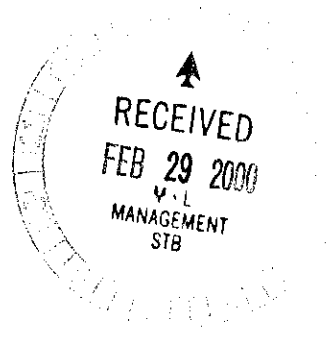
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Secretary  
Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary  
Case Control Unit  
Attn: STB Ex Parte No. 582  
1925 K Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001



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